

The book cover features a complex marbled pattern with dark green, black, and brown tones, overlaid with a network of reddish-brown veins. A central, rectangular, cream-colored label is framed by a thin, dark border. The text on the label is printed in a classic, serif font. In the bottom-left corner of the cover, there is a small, white, octagonal-shaped label with a slightly irregular, hand-cut appearance.

LIFE
OF
FERRAR.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

Princeton, N. J.

22 = 6



James Lenox.

BX 5199 .F4 L5 1833

The life of Nicholas Ferrar
M.A. and Fellow of Clare-







Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015



✓
THE LIFE

OF

✂
NICHOLAS FERRAR, M.A.

AND FELLOW OF CLARE-HALL, CAMBRIDGE.

DESIGNED PARTICULARLY FOR YOUTH.

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY FRENCH & PERKINS.

BOSTON:

PERKINS & MARVIN.

.....

1833.

ENTERED according to the Act of Congress, in the
year 1833, by FRENCH & PERKINS, in the Clerk's
Office of the District Court of the Eastern District of
Pennsylvania.

P R E F A C E.

IT is believed that the particulars contained in this little volume have never before been published in America, and are entirely out of print in Great Britain,* except in Dr. Wordsworth's voluminous "Ecclesiastical Biography." The book is rather a sketch, or a collection of anecdotes, than a regular biography. Its value would be much greater, if it were possible to add the exact dates of the events which it details. The only authority, however, on which we have relied, is the Memoir of Ferrar, by Bishop Turner, printed in 1761; and this has the same defect as to date.

The writer is of a different church from that of which the subject of this memoir was a conscientious member. Yet he loves to recognise true religion in every communion, and hopes that no reader will find reason to charge him with sectarianism in any of the following pages. It is useful to look at Christianity under every variety of circumstances, and the aspect in which it here presents itself will certainly be new to most. The character of Ferrar was marked by intelligence, enterprise, firmness, decision, mildness, humility, self-denial, devotion, and love. His youth was amiable and full of promise. His early manhood was spent in adventures which are almost romantic. His public life, though short, was brilliant. His years of maturity and decline were devoted to retired acts of piety. His death was like the serene going down of a summer's sun. And whatever judgment may be formed of the facts here recorded, or of the manner in which the compilation has been made, there is reason to believe that the work will be read with more than ordinary entertainment, if not instruction. May the giver of every good and perfect gift make this labour conducive to the instruction of youth, and the manifestation of His glory!

* Since this work has been in the hands of the printer, the compiler has met with an English reprint of Bishop Turner's Sketch, somewhat improved; Bristol, 1829. From this he has made a few additions.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

- Birth and Education of Nicholas Ferrar—He goes
abroad to School—Is entered at the University . . . 5

CHAPTER II.

- Mr. Ferrar sets out on his Travels—Visits Holland—
Germany—Attends the University at Leipsick—Re-
sides at Venice—Padua—Rome 14

CHAPTER III.

- Mr. Ferrar is sick in France—Escapes from a Pirate—
Adventures in Spain—Sails for London 26

CHAPTER IV.

- Mr. Ferrar returns home—Engages in the Virginia Com-
pany—Is elected to Parliament—Family Difficulties
—Plague 37

CHAPTER V.

- The Family of Ferrars retire into the Country 47

CHAPTER VI.

- Family Establishment at Little-Gidding—Rules—Man-
ner of spending the Lord's-day—Sunday-school . . . 53

CHAPTER VII.

- Daily Employments and Devotions at Little-Gidding—
Inscription—Vigils, or Watch-nights 68

CHAPTER VIII.

- Visitors—Domestic Habits—Message from the Queen—
Scripture Harmonies 78

CHAPTER IX.

- Self-denial of Mr. Ferrar—Characteristic Anecdotes . . 90

CHAPTER X.

- Last Illness and happy Death 99

THE LIFE
OF
NICHOLAS FERRAR.

CHAPTER I.

Birth and Education of Nicholas Ferrar—He goes abroad to School—Is entered at the University.

THE life of a true Christian is always instructive, even if there are some things in it which are liable to objection. The errors as well as the excellencies of good men may properly be described; and while the reader discerns between the one and the other, he should learn to avoid what is extravagant or improper, and to copy after what is laudable. If some things in the following history should seem uncommon, it must be remembered that the subject of it lived at a time when the principles of the Reformation were not yet fully established. In most particulars, he deserves to be imitated. There are a few in

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Page

Birth and Education of Nicholas Ferrar—He goes abroad to School—Is entered at the University . . . 5

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Ferrar sets out on his Travels—Visits Holland—Germany—Attends the University at Leipsick—Resides at Venice—Padua—Rome 14

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Ferrar is sick in France—Escapes from a Pirate—Adventures in Spain—Sails for London 26

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Ferrar returns home—Engages in the Virginia Company—Is elected to Parliament—Family Difficulties—Plague 37

CHAPTER V.

The Family of Ferrars retire into the Country 47

CHAPTER VI.

Family Establishment at Little-Gidding—Rules—Manner of spending the Lord's-day—Sunday-school . . . 53

CHAPTER VII.

Daily Employments and Devotions at Little-Gidding—Inscription—Vigils, or Watch-nights 68

CHAPTER VIII.

Visitors—Domestic Habits—Message from the Queen—Scripture Harmonies 78

CHAPTER IX.

Self-denial of Mr. Ferrar—Characteristic Anecdotes . . 90

CHAPTER X.

Last Illness and happy Death 99

THE LIFE
OF
NICHOLAS FERRAR.

CHAPTER I.

Birth and Education of Nicholas Ferrar—He goes abroad to School—Is entered at the University.

THE life of a true Christian is always instructive, even if there are some things in it which are liable to objection. The errors as well as the excellencies of good men may properly be described; and while the reader discerns between the one and the other, he should learn to avoid what is extravagant or improper, and to copy after what is laudable. If some things in the following history should seem uncommon, it must be remembered that the subject of it lived at a time when the principles of the Reformation were not yet fully established. In most particulars, he deserves to be imitated. There are a few in

which we shall all agree that he went to extremes. No one will doubt that he was a man of eminent piety, high devotion, unwearied diligence, and enlarged charity.

Nicholas Ferrar was born in London, on the first day of February, 1591. He was the third son of Mr. Nicholas Ferrar, a rich East India merchant. His parents were persons who feared God themselves, and who endeavoured from the earliest years to give their son a truly Christian education. This they justly thought more important than earthly wealth; and those parents are wise, who use all means to procure for their children this heavenly riches. Nicholas was a lovely child, but was from his infancy subject to a variety of complaints, so that he was an early sufferer. When he was only six years old, he showed a great desire for knowledge, and was diligent in trying to learn every thing valuable. Such boys will never long remain ignorant, for where there is a real thirst for information, it will always be gratified.

The delightful histories of the Bible drew his attention. The account given in Scripture of God's people is the most interesting narra-

tive which has ever been written, and so young Nicholas found it. In the course of two or three years he had made himself acquainted with the greater part of this, and committed to memory all the Psalms of David. This may appear to some youthful readers a wonderful labour. In childhood, however, the task is not so hard, and small portions of the Holy Scriptures, learned every day, will soon amount to a surprising quantity. It would be well, if every child were accustomed to learn, without book, a passage of the Bible each day of his life. While his little companions were at play, Nicholas would be busily employed in reading. He learned the history of his own country, and then applied himself to Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, which gives an account of those good men who have been put to death for the sake of Christ. It is said, that he often forgot his meals and his sleep, in his earnestness to go on with his reading.

When he was between seven and eight years of age, he was sent from home to the school of a Mr. Brooks, at Newbury, in Berkshire. This is always a critical time in

the life of a boy. Those who leave their father's house are exposed to peculiar temptations, and are often led astray. Providence directed Mr. and Mrs. Ferrar to a pious and faithful teacher, and one who made it his business to promote the happiness of his pupils. It seems likely that Nicholas received his first deep impressions of religion at this school. Mr. Brooks was a strict but affectionate man. He conducted all the affairs of his little seminary with the greatest discipline and regularity. There was a time for every thing, and a place for every thing, and every thing was required to be precisely in its time and place. The teacher had once been a minister in London, but had retired into the country to take charge of youth.

In this school, all the children were carefully instructed in the Scriptures, and the catechism of the Church to which they belonged. They were made to learn by heart the whole of the book of Psalms, the four Gospels, and the Epistles. Nicholas had a fine memory, and acquired this knowledge with more ease than his companions. It proved a great blessing to him in after-life. For he tra-

velled, and was dangerously ill, in countries where it was hazardous to be seen with a copy of the Scriptures. A Bible was thought, by these superstitious people, a sure mark of heresy. It was a great consolation to him, therefore, to have its most precious parts treasured up in his mind. Nicholas attended to his various tasks with the greatest cheerfulness and diligence. His proficiency was, therefore, very great. He became familiar with every branch of useful knowledge commonly taught in the schools. Besides this, he attended to some things which were not usual. He made himself master of shorthand, as it was then taught, and learned the principles of music, so as to sing by note. This is a most valuable attainment in one who wishes to sing the praises of God; and if it is not made in early life, it is generally neglected for ever.

There is always some danger lest a very quick and intelligent boy should be puffed up with vanity. The teachers of this youth were so proud of him as to say, that he could learn what he pleased. He seemed to understand every subject, and to master every difficulty.

Yet he had one mark of piety at that early age. He was humble and modest, and disliked to hear himself commended. Sometimes he would leave the table, weeping, when he was praised, and this sweet temper never forsook him.

At the age of thirteen, he was taken to the university of Cambridge. His preceptor declared, that, notwithstanding his youth, he was fully ripe for entering a college, and that any delay would be a mere loss of time. The reader will understand that each of the English universities is made up of a number of colleges, which have separate buildings, libraries, and masters. Nicholas Ferrar was admitted to the college which is called Clare-hall. This was a new scene, in which he needed special direction and care of divine grace. Colleges have often been found schools of vice to the youth who frequent them, and the best institutions are not without their dangers. There were, at this time, a number of very eminent instructors attached to Clare-hall, and one of these, Dr. Austin Lindsell, who was afterwards bishop of Peterborough, took young Ferrar under his special tuition.

His genius and diligence, and especially his vast memory, rendered him very soon distinguished. In the various competitions which took place in repeating by rote, or arguing, or declaiming, he was always ready, always modest and obedient, and almost always successful. After the usual course, he took the first degree, namely that of Bachelor of Arts, in 1610. It was then proposed to make him a fellow. Here it may be remarked that *fellowships* are peculiar to the British universities. A fellow is one who has passed through the regular course, and who, on account of his eminent scholarship, is supported gratuitously at the university. Here he may abide all his life, in the pursuit of his studies, if he is willing to remain unmarried. Ferrar was unanimously elected to a fellowship. In this situation he was very exemplary. No one was more regular or studious. He always arose upon the ringing of the chapel bell at five in the morning. It used to be said that his chamber might be known by the last candle extinguished at night, and the first lighted in the morning. At the same time his piety was remarked by all who knew him. His devotion

was warm and elevated, and his prudence and judgment preserved him from excess. He was universally respected and beloved, at an age when young men are commonly impatient of restraint and prone to folly.

The early weakness of his constitution had now been increased by his inordinate application to study, so that there were few, of either sex, who were more frail and sickly. The air of Cambridge proved unfavourable to his health, and he was forced to indulge in frequent excursions. The house of his sister, Mrs. Collet, who resided at Bourne, five miles from the university, was his favourite resort. She was a lady of excellent understanding, of much reading, and of solid piety. Here, in the intervals of study, he tried to be useful, by giving religious instruction and exhortation to his nephews and nieces, to whom he was like a father as long as he lived. At the advice of a physician, he endeavoured to renew his health by abstinence; but the lowest diet failed to drive away his diseases, and he was at length persuaded that nothing but a change of climate was likely to prolong his days. His parents were reluctant to part with

him ; his fellow collegians grieved over his departure ; yet, with the hope of his recovery, they yielded to his determination. They did not fear that he would be contaminated by the vices, or betrayed by the superstitions, of foreign countries. His pious principles were well established, and he was a zealous Protestant, from enlightened conviction of the truth.

We have every reason to think that he was at this time truly pious ; though, as is often the case, there was no point of time at which he was able to say that his heart was renewed. He probably gave way at one period to some youthful follies, yet it is but just to say, that the only evidence of this is his fondness in early youth for plays, romances, and other hurtful books. The manner in which he treated these works in after-life shall be more fully declared in its proper place.

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Ferrar sets out on his Travels—Visits Holland—Germany—Attends the University at Leipsick—Resides at Venice—Padua—Rome.

IT was about this time that Frederick, Elector Palatine, and afterwards king of Bohemia, married the lady Elizabeth, the only surviving daughter of James I. It may be observed here that George I. was the grandson of this Elizabeth. A party was formed, of noblemen and others, to escort the bride to the Continent, and Mr. Ferrar was advised by Dr. Scott, master of Clare-hall, to avail himself of this favourable opportunity for beginning his travels. Having, therefore, received the degree of Master of Arts, he left his beloved college, and united himself with this company of courtiers. The royal fleet landed them safely at Flushing, in Holland; and the short voyage had the happy effect of banishing some of the disorders under which he had been pining.

His first employment in Holland was to

make himself acquainted with the Dutch language, which he speedily accomplished so far as it was requisite for ordinary conversation. He then set himself diligently to learn every thing attainable concerning the history of the cities and provinces ; the nature of their government ; the strength of their fortifications, arsenals, and magazines ; their trade and commerce, banks and manufactories. This is one of the principal uses of foreign travel, and Holland was at that time in so flourishing a condition, that it afforded a good school for these branches of learning. He inquired into every particular respecting the revenue, the army, the navy, the shipping, and the charitable establishments of the country. He likewise visited the Reformed churches, and compared their doctrine and discipline with those of his native land. In particular he endeavoured to learn the wonderful dealings of God's providence, in the punishment of sin, and the preservation of his people, as displayed in the history of the countries through which he travelled.

Mr. Ferrar attended upon the Countess Palatine at Middleburg, the Hague, and Amster-

dam. The reception which she everywhere met with was splendid, and the young traveller was much flattered and caressed. This was dangerous to his spiritual interest, but he seems to have escaped the snare. He was assured that if he accompanied the Countess home, he would probably be made her secretary; but he replied that he aimed at lower things. When he perceived, therefore, that they were about to pass out of Holland into Germany, he begged to be dismissed, and suffered them to proceed without him. Upon coming to Hamburg, he frequented the company of the English merchants there, by whom he was well entertained. They formed high ideas of his excellence and sobriety. It is remarkable, at that age, and in that country, that he practised a total abstinence with regard to intoxicating liquors. No persuasion could induce him to take either wine or strong drink. He did not yield for the sake of politeness, as so many young men unfortunately do. When they found they could not tempt him to indulge with them, they acknowledged that he was in the right way, though they pretended it was a path in which they could not walk

themselves. It is one of the best tokens of future prosperity to a young man, when he entirely abstains from strong drink. He is thus freed from a destructive temptation, and saved from the gulf of drunkenness, into which many an unwary youth has fallen. And the reader may be assured, that if he indulges in any intoxicating liquor, he is in imminent danger as to both body and soul.

Passing through several cities, he arrived at Leipsick, in Saxony, where there is a celebrated university. Here he determined to remain some time, for the purpose of learning such things as were there taught in a superior manner. Among other things he acquired the art of mnemonics, or artificial memory. The citizens of Leipsick were celebrated then, as they have been ever since, for their skill in the mechanic arts. This singular young man had so insatiable a desire for all useful knowledge, that he adopted the uncommon plan of serving a kind of apprenticeship, for a week or fortnight, with the artificers of every rare kind of work. Painters, dyers, weavers, and smiths were frequently at his lodgings, giving him instruction in their several crafts. Hence

he acquired a great fund of matter for conversation, for he could talk with an architect in his own phrases, and with seamen in their peculiar dialect. The great world was the book which he now read, storing up abundance of knowledge to be turned to future use. Hence he acquired a singular ability for interesting conversation. It was often observed that he excelled in familiar discourse, and, without pedantry, knew how to make every interview profitable; drawing illustrations from the most striking facts of sacred and civil history, or from his own observations.

The literary society of Leipsick flocked around him to such a degree, that he was forced to seek his beloved retirement in the adjacent country. Here he gave his time to the perusal of works upon German history and politics. All men concluded that he was preparing himself to be a great statesman, or civil leader in his own land. The news of this reached his father, who was gratified with the hope, and wrote to him that he might employ as much time and money as he chose, but entreated him to spare his delicate constitution. He left Leipsick, therefore, and af-

ter visiting some of the smaller states of Germany, and finding that the plague raged in many towns, he passed through Vienna into Italy.

When Mr. Ferrar arrived at the Venetian territory, he found the inhabitants all engaged in keeping the forty days' fast of Lent, in the manner usual among the Roman Catholics. He did not choose to resist the rules imposed upon him, especially as he had long been accustomed to rigid abstinence. The solitude of his days was employed in copying out his notes, and methodizing an account of his travels. In the morning it was his practice to go into a neighbouring mountain, which abounded in fragrant herbs. With a few books, and with many hours of prayer, he made the time delightful, and returned again in the evening to a frugal meal of oil and fish. We are assured that he never omitted his regular seasons of devotion on account of the interruptions of travelling. Even at midnight he usually rose to pray. He needed few books, having so much of the Scriptures in his memory, and "when he had not time and place

to kneel, he made the lowest prostration of his spirit."

On a certain occasion he was riding through a narrow and dangerous passage of the Italian Alps, some paces behind his guide, when an ass came suddenly between them, laden with a huge piece of timber, which filled the whole way. The passage was narrow, with a precipice on the one side, and a perpendicular wall on the other. When the guide looked round, he saw the peril, and cried out "O Lord! the man is lost, if he had a hundred lives!" Mr. Ferrar, hearing the guide's voice, was surprised, and, looking up, saw the ass coming down hastily upon him. He perceived that the wood must precipitate him and his mule into the awful depth below. In this emergency he fervently called upon God to preserve him, and by his omnipotent mercy to find some means of delivering him. Just as the animal approached, she tripped, and the piece of timber being moved, swayed away from its former position. He stopped his mule, the ass passed quietly by, and he received only a gentle brush on one side from the log. He instantly fell prostrate upon the

ground, and made humble acknowledgment to Almighty God for his preservation. The guide, and the owner of the ass, who had come up by this time, and told how she broke away as they were loading her, stood crossing themselves, and crying *miracolo!* a miracle!

Almost every individual can call to mind remarkable instances of God's preserving care, but it is not every one who thankfully acknowledges the favour of Providence; and few, like Mr. Ferrar, record and remember their deliverances.

At Padua, where we next find him, he applied himself, with great enthusiasm, to the study of medicine, for proficiency in which this city was famous. It was more common then than at the present day, for young men of liberal fortunes to make themselves acquainted with all the sciences, even though they never expected to become regular practitioners. The infirmity of his frame was also an inducement for him to learn something of the healing art. He gained the confidence and favour of the most eminent scholars at Padua, who were surprised at his attainments. The Englishmen sojourning in that country

burdened him so much with their visits, that he retreated to various country places, sometimes as much as forty miles from the city. He occasionally remained for a time at Venice, under the roof of Sir Dudley Charlton, the English ambassador, who treated him with great hospitality.

While he resided at Padua, he was seized with a violent illness. His medical friends held a consultation over him, and expressed their fear that he was near his end. It was their opinion that blood-letting was the proper remedy, if there was any which could prove successful; but when it was proposed to him, he declared his belief that it would only hasten his death. A very old Italian doctor was present, who said that the young man was his own best physician, and prevailed upon the others to defer bleeding; and within three or four days they were all convinced that he was right. This old gentleman was transported with joy at having contributed towards his recovery, and used to come every day, and sit for hours with his patient, enjoying his conversation and wondering at his piety. It was a great trial to Mr. Ferrar to be dangerously

ill among ignorant and superstitious people, where the Bible was forbidden, and religious fellowship unknown.

Upon his recovery he proposed to visit Rome. 'This great city has always been the principal attraction of travellers in Italy. Its ancient greatness, its noble ruins, and its specimens of art are highly gratifying to scholars and men of taste. Besides this, it is the centre of the Romish church, the residence of the pope and cardinals, and the place where the papacy may be viewed in perfection. Mr. Ferrar was a scholar, and he wished to see the spot most famous in ancient history ; he was a Christian and a Protestant, and he was desirous of a better insight into the church-politics of popery. The Jesuits were at this time in the height of power, and the spirit of persecution was displayed upon every suitable occasion towards those who were called heretics. There was a college of English Jesuits at Rome, and Mr. Ferrar was informed that these men were on the watch for him ; that they had an exact description of his person and manners, and were acquainted with all his movements ; and that they already suspected him of having

some bad design in visiting Italy. It was not then so safe to visit Roman Catholic countries as it is in these days. Mr. Ferrar, therefore, travelled from Padua, in a very private manner, on foot. He arrived at Rome upon Monday in what is called *Holy Week*, before Easter day. He changed his lodgings every night, and stayed only ten days. This time he used so judiciously, as to see every thing that was remarkable at that season of pomp.

Upon one occasion he was so imprudent as to press into a gallery through which the pope was at that moment passing in great state. As is usual, the multitude fell upon their knees to ask an indulgence. Mr. Ferrar was a man who possessed all the courtesy of those times, and he would willingly have paid those compliments to the pope which he might demand as a mere prince. He was, however, a sincere Protestant, and stood erect for some moments, unwilling to bow down to the pretended vicar of Christ. The consequences might have been serious, had not one of the Swiss guards laid his heavy hand on his shoulder, and pressed him down. When the pope had passed, and the Swiss released

him, he departed with the crowd. He used to say that he felt the hand of his brawny preserver for a whole week afterwards, and that he frequented such assemblages no more.

C

CHAPTER III.

Mr. Ferrar is sick in France—Escapes from a Pirate—
Adventures in Spain—Sails for London.

IT was now time for our young traveller to leave Italy. He therefore went to Marseilles, intending to go thence by sea into Spain. Providence, however, detained him longer than he had expected, by an illness more violent than that which he had suffered at Padua. The person at whose house he lodged, as well as the physician who attended him, took him for a knight of Malta. These knights were a society of religious warriors, under subjection to the pope, who had fought in Palestine during the crusades, and who for a long period held the island of Malta in their possession. The way in which these persons came to think thus of Mr. Ferrar was this. While he lay ill, they saw among his curiosities one of the little crosses worn by those knights, which was presented to him while he was among them. He was, therefore, treated with

high respect, especially by the doctor, who was astonished to hear a young knight of Malta express himself so learnedly upon the subject of medicine.

Soon after he was taken ill, he wrote an importunate letter to a very intimate friend, Mr. Garton, at Venice, urging the latter by every affectionate entreaty to come and see him. In this letter he stated, that he was alone among strangers; that he had no religious adviser, and no religious book; and that he needed a friend to secure for him a decent interment. Thus was his faith again tried, and his soul again reduced to the necessity of giving up all earthly hopes. He grew worse and worse, and his disorder arrived at such a critical point, that he clearly saw a few hours more would bring relief, either by amendment or death. The physician sadly took leave of him, expecting never again to see him alive.

There are few things which put Christian graces to a more severe test than dangerous sickness. The trial is greatly aggravated when one suffers alone, afar from friends, and in a strange land. Yet this young man did not yield to despondency. He resigned him-

self to the will of his heavenly Father, and at the same time prayed night and day that God would grant him his favour. Soon after the departure of the physician, it pleased God to answer his prayers. He fell into a refreshing slumber, from which he awaked in much comfort. The attendants thought his speedy amendment to be little short of a miracle, and we may all allow that it was a special blessing of divine Providence. To double his thanks and praises, his dear friend Mr. Garton, from Venice, arrived about the same time, came in weeping, and never left him until he had entirely recovered. In this instance, as in many others, we see the accomplishment of that promise to the believer: "The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness."—Ps. xli. 3.

Soon after his recovery, he embarked, in a small English vessel of twelve guns, for a port in Spain. At that time the Mediterranean Sea was greatly infested with pirates or corsairs. Some of these were Turkish, and others Moorish. This enormity has been very much done away, of late, by the European and American

squadrons which guard that sea. Before they had been long out, a Turkish pirate gave chase to their little vessel, and was gaining upon them every hour. The master and mate were courageous, but the seamen trembled with fear, and were desirous of striking their colours, and surrendering without a shot. Mr. Ferrar kept his stand upon deck, and listened to all that was said, though he made no remark. The master of the vessel at length asked his opinion, observing: "This young gentleman has a life to lose as well as we; shall we hear what he thinks of it?" Here we may observe that true piety is the greatest source of genuine courage. Mr. Ferrar had in his mind those words of David: "Let us fall into the hands of God, and not into the hands of men." More especially he dreaded to fall into the inhuman hands of murderers. He therefore encouraged them to be manful, and defend their vessel. He addressed the crew, and set before them the horrid fate they might expect in case of capture. His words had such an effect upon them that they prepared for self-defence, and none was more active or resolute than young Ferrar. The pi-

rate had been trying for some time to get the advantage of the wind, or what is called the weather-gage, and was apparently just about to bear down upon them. The English captain determined to seize the little opportunity allowed, and give them a broadside, but just as he was about making a signal to the gunner, the Turkish ship, to their great astonishment and delight, fell off, and steered away with all the sail she could make. They soon discovered the reason of this. A much larger ship, promising greater booty, had appeared in sight, and the corsair turned to pursue her. They thanked God, and expressed their obligation to the gallant passenger who had done so much to animate their sinking spirits.

War and bloodshed are plainly contrary to the spirit of the gospel. Christians are divided in their sentiments even as to resistance in self-defence. We give this account only as matter of history, without expressing any opinion on the question alluded to.

Ferrar, being now fairly landed in Spain, made the best of his way to the capital, where he expected remittances of money from his father. Upon inquiring, however, of the Eng-

lish merchants at Madrid, he found that no such supplies had been sent. The winning demeanour and interesting discourse of the young traveller induced these gentlemen to make him every offer of assistance, but this he saw fit to decline. Yet he was almost peniless, and felt much embarrassment. It was his intention to make the tour of Spain, and then to pass through France into England. While he was deliberating upon the course which he should now take, he received the painful news, that his family was involved in sad distresses, and that his presence was absolutely necessary to extricate and relieve them. Abandoning, therefore, his long-expected visit to France, he determined to go directly to St. Sebastians, and take ship for England.

Poverty is a grievous yoke when it falls suddenly upon those who have been brought up in affluence. Happy are they who, through divine grace, are enabled to bear such reverses with serenity and content! Mr. Ferrar immediately sold some of his jewels to supply his present necessity, and then, with a costly rapier in his hand, he set out *in cuerpo*, that

is, as we say, in his shirt sleeves, to travel on foot. He was a Protestant in a land of persecution, without money, without protection; yet he cast himself upon that kind Providence which had protected him so long, and chose this method of travelling, that he might pass through the country with less suspicion.

About this time there was a war in Flanders, which excited very general attention, and wherever our traveller stopped he usually made many inquiries upon this subject. Hence there were many who took him for a young Italian gentleman, going to Flanders, to serve under the Marquis Spinola, a great commander in the Spanish service. At one little town, the governor insisted upon having his valuable rapier. This he refused, saying, that a man of courage ought never to surrender his sword. The governor still demanded it. Ferrar answered resolutely, that if it were forced from him, he should find friends at court who would secure him his rights. It was thought from this, that he was some distinguished person in disguise, for this kind of concealment was common at that day. The governor therefore

said : “ Well, sir, I did this only to try you ; I see you love your arms, which, indeed, is soldier-like ; I perceive you are for the Flemish wars under your countryman Spinola.” He then allowed him to proceed upon his wearisome journey.

He used to relate what he supposed to be a narrow escape out of danger upon this solitary journey. On a certain day, as he toiled along his way, guessing at the path by directions which had been given, he found the evening beginning to close upon him. The road seemed to lead up a very high hill. This he ascended with some difficulty, and found himself near a vast circuit of ground, flanked and bulwarked on every side with steep rocks, and without any visible outlet. His perplexity was great, for he saw that he had mistaken his way, and thought it likely that he must spend the night in the open air. Under these circumstances, he betook himself to prayer, beseeching God to direct and help him. It was too late to turn back, and he looked in every direction for some path. Just then he spied a great black hog running out between two

rocks. He ran after the animal, to see whither it might lead, in hopes that some dwelling was not far distant. At length he saw it run down at the further end of the mountain, and going thither, he perceived a recess hewn out of the rock, with something like a window. He entered into a winding passage, which grew more dark until he came to a glimmering of more light again, from a similar window. Upon listening, he overheard human voices, and found this to be a *Venta*, or miserable Spanish tavern. Having no choice, he entered and saluted the host, who wondered how he reached the place. Very soon he found that he had fallen into wretched company. He, therefore, said that he needed repose, and lay down on a bench to sleep, with his rapier in his hand. He had not lain long, before two men of ferocious appearance, accompanied by a female, entered. In order to decoy the stranger into a brawl, one of these ruffians insulted the woman; the other protected her, and so they proceeded to feign a battle. They flourished their swords, and the weaker called on the stranger to lend his aid. Ferrar, know-

ing that they meant to rob him, lay perfectly quiet. By means of the landlord's intercession the quarrel was ended, and before sunrise, the guest had stolen away. Such adventures are by no means rare, even at the present day, in Spain.

At length, through the blessing of God, he reached St. Sebastians, a port at the north of Spain, upon the Bay of Biscay. Here he was detained some time, waiting for a fair wind. The English merchants treated him with great tenderness, and made him numerous offers of money. He was unwilling to take more than ten pounds, which he accepted as a loan. Embarking as soon as the wind was favourable, he had a good passage to Dover. Here he leaped upon shore, fell upon his face on the earth, and rendered most humble thanks to God, his heavenly Father, for so many preservations abroad, and for bringing him safely home to his beloved native country. The sentiments which he felt were probably like those which the poet has since expressed :

Thy mercy sweetened every toil,
Made every region please :
The hoary Alpine hills it warm'd,
And smooth'd the Tyrrhene seas.

In midst of dangers, fears, and death,
Thy goodness I'll adore,
And praise thee for thy mercies past,
And humbly hope for more.

My life, if thou preserv'st my life,
Thy sacrifice shall be ;
And death, if death must be my doom,
Shall join my soul to thee.

ADDISON.

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Ferrar returns home—Engages in the Virginia Company—Is elected to Parliament—Family Difficulties—Plague.

MR. FERRAR immediately hastened to London, and entering, in his Spanish dress, the house of his father, knelt before the old gentleman, and craved his blessing. His father did not know him until he named himself, but was transported with joy upon the discovery. After six years' absence, he had returned with a great increase of health and accomplishments. It was his desire to return to his fellowship at Clare-hall, but at the anxious request of his parents, he consented to take up his abode in London.

It was about this time that the *Virginia Company* was engaged in promoting the new colony upon the banks of the James river, in America; and old Mr. Ferrar was very deeply interested in this scheme, which proved in the end so important to our forefathers. He was an intimate friend of the three celebrated voy-

agers, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir John Hawkins, and Sir Francis Drake.

The English colonies in America were established during the reign of James I. Queen Elizabeth had done little more than to give a name to Virginia, as the whole of the Atlantic coast was then called. After the decay of one little colony, the country was abandoned, until, in 1606, Newport took over a company of adventurers. In 1609 five hundred persons, under Sir Thomas Gates and Sir George Somers, embarked for Virginia. The first lottery ever known in England was licensed in aid of the new settlements, of which Lord Delaware was governor. In 1614 there were not alive more than four hundred. The *London Company*, sometimes called the *Virginia Company*, had received its patent as early as 1589. It was a highly respectable body, embracing a multitude of gentlemen, barons, viscounts, and earls, and most of the patrons of literature and the arts. They appear to have been sincerely desirous of establishing schools in America.* It may be interesting to observe that king Powhatan died in 1618,

* Hume, vol. iv. p. 319. Appendix

the year in which Raleigh was cruelly beheaded.

Men of every class were found ready to interest themselves in this great enterprise of settling the wilds of Virginia. Some were anxious to give a home and employment to unsettled people. Some were desirous of affording estates to younger brothers and sons. Others looked further, to the great revenue which would accrue from the commodities of the new country; and a few were solicitous that the savages of the forest should receive the gospel. Many of the bishops and clergy lent their aid in this affair. It is said that they were desirous of wiping off the reproach cast upon Protestants by the Church of Rome, that the former converted no unbelievers in foreign lands. And it must be confessed, that there was but a slender zeal among the Christians of England, at that period, for the illumination of the heathen; and that the early settlers in Virginia accomplished nothing directly towards this great object.*

* We find the name of Mr. N. Ferrar among those of the Virginia adventurers as early as 1620, in Smith's History of Virginia, vol. ii. p. 45.

One of the missionaries sent to America was a son of Dr. William Whitaker, the celebrated theologian and controvertist, and master of St. John's college, Cambridge. This young man was by some called "the apostle of Virginia."

The principal manager of the new enterprise, and the treasurer of the Virginia Company, was Sir Edwin Sandys. With this gentleman young Mr. Ferrar was closely intimate. Sir Edward was a learned and worthy man, and used to say that he esteemed it as greatly to his honour to be the pupil of good Richard Hooker, as to be the son of the Archbishop of York. Old Mr. Ferrar gave the use of a large parlour to the directors of the Virginia Company; and this little incident has some interest to an American reader, who cannot but imagine how the debates and councils of that room were caused by Providence to bear upon the history of our native land. The good old man was pleased to see his son fully entering into the same ardour with regard to the new settlements. He and his brother, Mr. John Ferrar, gave two shares of land in the island of Bermuda for

the establishment of a free-school there, and sent a large number of Bibles and Psalm-books for the use of the children. More than twenty noblemen interested themselves in this undertaking; among whom the most distinguished was Lord Southampton, who had been the intimate friend of Shakspeare.

Young Mr. Ferrar became the acting secretary of the Company, though he would not consent to share any of the fees. He was named upon all committees, and draughted all the letters of advice which were written to the colonists. He framed and ordered all instructions as to government, agriculture, and commerce; managed the fitting out of vessels, and had a part in all the active business. Hence, if for no other reason, his name deserves to be remembered by American youth. In all these employments he acquired the esteem and gratitude of those who patronised the scheme, and evinced at the same time his talents and his probity.

There are two circumstances which occurred about this time, and which we mention as showing the estimation in which Mr. Ferrar was held, and his resolution in declining flatter-

ing solicitations. The lecturer on mathematics at Gresham college became Savilian professor at Oxford, and left the former situation vacant. He recommended Mr. Ferrar as his successor, advising the directors of the institution to secure to themselves his influence and talents, even if they should find it necessary to augment the salary. The offer was accordingly made, but he modestly yet firmly declined it; declaring that he had other intentions and aims, if it pleased God to ripen them for a happy issue. The other circumstance is as follows. A wealthy merchant, who was one of the Virginia Company, was so much struck with the genius and virtues of this uncommon young man, as to cause him to be informed, that it would give him pleasure to settle ten thousand pounds upon his only daughter, if Mr. Ferrar thought proper to marry her. Such a proceeding was more common at that day than at present. He endeavoured to evade this by some pleasantry, and by assuring the father that he was not worthy to venture upon the management of so great an estate. The gentleman insisted with an importunity which was scarcely delicate. Mr. Ferrar then as-

sured him, that his plans of life were matured, that he had consulted his own character and disposition, and was resolved to lead a single life. In truth, he had already determined to retire from public life, and to share what remained of the family estate with his relations. The disappointed father reluctantly submitted; saying, however, that if the young man never married, he should take it the more patiently. He continued to be a firm friend.

In the year 1624, a parliament was called, and Mr. Ferrar was elected a member of the House of Commons. He took a conspicuous part in public business; but the account of this could not be interesting to our readers, and is therefore omitted. It has already been hinted that his return from the continent of Europe was hastened by family embarrassments. These were so great that it seemed highly probable that the whole estate would be lost. Although he was the younger brother, he was called upon to take the principal management of this business; which he did so effectually, that soon after the death of his father, the whole affair was happily adjusted, and the family restored to competence. Such

was his pious acknowledgment of the divine favour, in thus rescuing them when they were to all appearance sinking, that he ever afterwards set apart the last day of every month as a day of devotion. At that day, prayers and praises for the deliverance of the family were regularly offered up, until the troubles of the ensuing period broke up the happy society.

The year 1625 is memorable in the history of London as that in which Charles I. came to the crown. It was also remarkable for the great prevalence of the plague. This pestilential disorder has generally been supposed to have its principal seat in Egypt, but was, for many years, the scourge of Europe. It first appeared in London in 1593, and destroyed more than eleven thousand persons. In 1603 it returned, and with greater violence, as thirty-six thousand are supposed to have died. Its next appearance was in the year of which we are speaking. It is calculated that the persons who fell victims to it amounted to thirty-five thousand five hundred. And this mortality will appear the greater when we recollect that London was less populous at that time than the city of New York is at

present. We have all learned from the prevalence of Cholera in our own country, how great is the alarm produced by such a visitation. In the case of the plague, the panic was still greater, as it was universally believed to be in the highest degree contagious. No one doubted the possibility of its being communicated by means of clothing, books, or even papers. In the present instance, it occasioned the adjournment of king Charles' first parliament from London to Oxford, and finally the dissolution of that body, when the pestilence reached the latter place. The naval expedition against Spain was forced to return in consequence of its seizing some of the seamen and soldiers. It is to be remarked that in 1636, the plague carried off about as many more, and that its last ravages were in the year 1665, when nearly seventy thousand died of it in London alone. This visitation is justly called the *Great Plague of London*.

True religion is the only sure preventive of fear, under such circumstances of alarm. A preparation for eternity, and a good hope through grace, can remove the fear even of sudden death by pestilence. Those who are

the last to fly, the boldest in facing danger, and the readiest to relieve the distressed, are ever found to be the truly pious.

In the next house to that in which the Ferrars lived, there was a death by the plague. Some of the family were invited to the funeral, and being ignorant of the disease, attended it. Shortly after, a second person was seized in the same house, and Mr. Ferrar, beginning to understand the danger, instantly removed his mother and the rest of the household to Mrs. Collet's, in Cambridgeshire. Being himself engaged, however, in settling the affairs of the estate, he would not leave the city, until he had paid every debt, and cleared himself of all engagements. At this time, the deaths in London amounted to four thousand in a single week. God preserved him during all this time of pestilence, and returned him safely to his beloved relatives.

CHAPTER V.

The Family of Ferrars retire into the Country.

NOT long before this, Mr. Ferrar had purchased an estate in an obscure part of Huntingdonshire, called Little-Gidding. It was finely situated, in a delightful climate, but the country around was almost a solitude. There was no dwelling in the whole parish, except the manor-house, and a cottage for the shepherds and their dogs. The estate lay in pasture, and needed no greater care. To this retirement Mr. Ferrar sent his brother John, about the beginning of the plague, to make ready an apartment for him: and when his business in London was concluded, he went thither himself, in order to be far from society. According to the notions of those times, he was afraid of communicating the infection to his friends, and entreated his mother to remain with her daughter at Bourne, until, by a month's exposure of himself to the sun and air, he should

do away all fear of contagion. The affectionate old lady would not consent to this, but in her anxiety to see her beloved son, who had hazarded his life for their sake, set out to visit him. She arrived at Gidding three days after his coming, and their meeting was an affecting one. Both were full of thanks to God for his providential kindness. He entreated her to come into the ruinous old house, and rest herself. "Not so," said she, "yonder I see the church, let us first go thither, to give God thanks that he has brought me to this good place, and restored me my son." He informed her that through the irreligion of the former inhabitant, the place of worship had been turned into a barn and hog-sty, and was at that moment filled with hay, which he intended as soon as possible to remove. Mrs. Ferrar seems to have had something of the temper which Augustin ascribes to his mother Monica, when he says of her, that if a dragon had stood between her and the altar, he verily believed she would have braved it to advance thither. To such strong associations of sanctity with the place of worship, we must add the fact, that at that day, churches were much

used for private devotion, and we shall be able to account for the earnestness of Mrs. Ferrar. She persevered in going to the church, pressed in as far as she could, and kneeled and wept there for a quarter of an hour. She then charged her son to send for all the labourers about the house, and instantly to remove the hay from the church, and cleanse it as far as was practicable. She saw this done before she would leave the door of her house. She then proceeded to enter the old mansion, in which there was scarcely a room fit to be inhabited. Yet they were cheerful and happy, and the next morning employed themselves in making preparation for the repairing of the church. If some persons should see in this conduct a measure of superstition, others will be ready to acknowledge that it indicates sincerity of devotion ; reminding us of the Psalmist's vow, to give himself no rest until he *had found out a place for the house of the Lord*. She made public acknowledgment, indeed, at this very time, that she had solemnly engaged to serve God more faithfully than she had heretofore done, and to be more and more a temple of the Holy Ghost. Her heart was filled with

gratitude to the Most High, for having redeemed her and her children from death, and her lips were employed with the words: *The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.*

Still the family were not all collected. At the expiration of a month, therefore, she sent to Mrs. Collet's, at Bourne, for her children, grandchildren, and other relatives, that they might all enter upon their new mode of life at Little-Gidding. The dilapidated house was then put through a course of repairs, which it greatly needed, as the family consisted of about forty persons. More than twenty of these were the descendants of old Mrs. Ferrar. It was their custom, conformably to the manner of that age, to kneel down every morning and receive her blessing. It was a time of general distress, and there were many difficulties in the family affairs, but Mr. Ferrar now proceeded to execute the darling plan of his life, and to establish a household which should make religion its great concern. The church was completed, and they indulged an innocent pleasure in laying, with their own hands, each a stone of the additional building.

As the plague was prevailing in London to an awful extent, the whole family determined to assemble in the church three times every day, and the minister of the next parish, called Steeple-Gidding, offered to assist them. He was a friendly man, and proved a great blessing to them in succeeding years. With a willing heart he joined them in all their acts of worship, and these were very numerous. The solitary situation of the manor-house contributed very much to the quietness, peace, and devotion of the happy family. They were far from the court, far from the bustle of trade, far from the idle curiosity which is ever seeking some new thing. Their family constituted the whole parish, and they began to experience the sweetness of a secluded life. Where retirement is sought for pious purposes, and is employed in holy acts, it exempts from many temptations, and conduces to purity of mind. While this unhealthy summer was a time of general distress throughout England, they were permitted by a kind Providence to spend the time in great tranquillity and safety.

The Ferrars remained at Little-Gidding during the winter, and in the spring of 1626

made a short visit to London. The old lady intended this as her farewell to the capital. She took leave of her friends, let her house in the city, and made a final settlement of all her pecuniary affairs. Their haste was the greater, as Mr. Ferrar intended, at the approaching Whitsuntide, to enter into holy orders, and become a regular minister in the church of England. He therefore devoted much time to solemn preparation, by fasting and prayer, and spent the whole of the night preceding that day in watching and devotion. Yet his purpose was kept an entire secret from the other members of the family.

CHAPTER VI.

Family Establishment at Little-Gidding—Rules—Manner of spending the Lord's-day—Sunday-school.

WE are now about to relate the manner in which this remarkable man prepared himself and his family for a more entire devotion of themselves to the service of God. And here, in order to prevent mistake, it will be proper to make a few introductory observations. No reader will be likely to question the sincerity of Mr. Ferrar's zeal and piety, but there will be a difference of opinion as to the wisdom of the methods which he pursued. It has already been said that we do not mean to recommend his practice as an example in every particular. Our object is to present a fair and faithful narrative. The reader will judge how far this evinces his discretion and Christian ardour. Even among Protestants, there are some points upon which true Christians differ. All are not agreed respecting the government

of the church, the forms of worship, the observance of fasts and festivals, and a variety of similar particulars. In all these respects, Mr. Ferrar, as it will be seen, was a conscientious member of the church of England. The writer of this biography holds other sentiments, and is of a different persuasion: yet he honours the devotion manifested by this excellent man, and believes that many who differ in these matters will cordially agree in respecting the instances of piety here recorded.

Mr. Ferrar, having resolved to enter into holy orders, kept this determination to himself, lest he should be perplexed by the opposition of his friends. The only individual to whom he confided his purpose was his former tutor, the Rev. Dr. Lindsell of Clare-hall. This good man was filled with joy at the tidings; he was like one in a dream, and could scarcely credit his own ears. It was delightful to him to hear that his pupil, renouncing all his fair prospects of eminence in the state and the world, was willing to devote himself to the special service of God, and he was persuaded that, by the divine blessing, he would shine among those who turn many to righteousness.

Early upon Trinity Sunday, Mr. Ferrar went with this friend to Henry the Seventh's Chapel, at Westminster Abbey, and there received orders as a deacon from the Bishop of London. Towards evening, he returned home to his mother, and begged her to hear something which he wished to read to her. He then drew from his bosom a parchment, signed with his own hand, containing a solemn vow which he had made, that since Almighty God had afforded him so many gracious deliverances, and had rescued his family from impending ruin, he would now separate himself to serve God in a holy calling, and to be the spiritual guide of his own numerous relations. His mother and friends were as much amazed as delighted with this information. The pious woman showered her tears and blessings upon him, beseeching God to fill him every day more and more with his Holy Spirit, and to grant him a long life, as an unspeakable blessing to her, and the whole family. They all assured him, that they also, by God's assistance, would seek, with greater care and diligence than ever, the one thing needful.

The news of this unexpected event was

quickly spread through the city and court. There were some friends who censured his imprudence. There were more who wondered at his decision. The best and wisest highly commended him, and among the rest, his friend Sir Edwin Sandys. This gentleman made it his last request to him that he would be his executor, and charged his lady to do nothing without the advice of Mr. Ferrar. A member of the Virginia Company, supposing that he would not refuse preferment in the church, though he had declined state-promotion, offered him a living of three hundred pounds a year. Another nobleman invited his acceptance of a living of four hundred pounds. Both these he refused, saying that he had already parted with all his property, by sharing it equally with his kindred, and that he would now employ his poor abilities in striving for their spiritual welfare.

The little church at Gidding was now fitted up with great care for divine service, and it was a favourite employment of Mrs. Ferrar to arrange and beautify it. An old dove-house which belonged to the manor was emptied of its pigeons, and turned into a handsome school-

house. Not only their own children, but those of the neighbouring parishes were here admitted, at the request of their parents. Although religion was the great thing in which they were instructed, yet proper attention was bestowed upon grammar, writing, arithmetic, and music. There were as many as three different masters for these subjects. Mr. Ferrar then assigned to his nieces and female relations, according to their ages, chambers, closets, gardens, and pleasure-walks. He fitted up convenient lodgings for the teachers and scholars, and so placed his own apartments, in the centre of the house, that he could easily oversee the whole. He provided a room called the Infirmary, which was used for the care of such as were taken sick. Every thing was according to fixed rule. There were times and places at which the children and youth might run, and leap, and practise with the bow and arrow. On Thursday and Saturday part of the afternoon was allowed for these pastimes, in order that they might not suffer in health for want of exercise.

The young women of the family were nine

or ten in number. It was a favourite notion of Mr. Ferrar, that they should be uniform in dress; and they were always appareled in a plain, dark stuff, and all alike. They were caused to spend much time at needlework, and this was often for the poor. According to the custom of the times, they learned to dress wounds, to make salves and ointments, to distil such cordials as were thought medicinal; and there was a room set apart for these things. They freely gave away their remedies among the poor, and kept a kind of Dispensary, which cost something considerable every year, and was much frequented by the country people. They put in practice their healing art by attending to the wounds of the neighbouring poor. Mr. Ferrar wisely prohibited any regular prescription. Though he had paid some attention to the science when he was in Italy, yet he never ventured upon practice, and forbade his family to tamper or meddle with it. These young women were instructed to use all proper means for the instruction, conversion, and comfort of the sick whom they visited. In domestic affairs, the four nieces took turns as

managers. Each superintended the family affairs for a month at a time ; and this was rather a recreation than a task. They were required to keep an accurate account of all the weekly expenditures, allowing every small matter its column in their books ; and by this means they became good accountants and thrifty managers. The land was let out upon shares to tenants, who by agreement were to serve the family with provisions at a uniform rate ; and their fare was frugal, yet with variety enough to suit every one's health and constitution.

Such was the uniformity observed in Mr. Ferrar's family, that the history of one week would be the history of the whole year. To begin with the first day of the week ; on the Lord's-day, they rose, as on other days, about five o'clock in winter, and about four in summer. The good old mother was up betimes with the rest. After having, on their bended knees, in their several apartments, given God thanks for the night's preservation, they came one after another into the great chamber, which was furnished with a handsome suit of hangings, and in winter provided with

a good fire. There they never failed to find their protector and friend before them. The younger children repeated to him the chapters and psalms which they had committed to memory. This exercise lasted until about seven o'clock, after which they retired to their private rooms for two hours.

At nine o'clock the bell rang to call them to prayers in the church. The household met in the great chamber, where a hymn was sung, accompanied with the organ. They thence walked to the church, in regular order, two and two, according to their age and standing. The three schoolmasters led the way, the youths followed; this good son led his aged mother, his two brothers going before her, and all the children after her. Then followed the servants, making in all a very solemn procession. At the church Mr. Ferrar officiated in divine service. Upon returning home, his elder nieces, and some others appointed for that duty, sat in a gallery, if it were summer, or, if it were winter, in their large room by the fire, and heard the children repeat the psalms which they had learned the week before. This was, in truth, a SUNDAY-

SCHOOL, though the name was not then known, as it was more than a hundred and fifty years before Sunday-schools were instituted. Mr. Ferrar was greatly desirous that the whole vicinity should receive profit from his family; he therefore gave notice that such of the neighbouring children as chose to appear there upon Sunday morning should receive each a penny for every one of the Psalms of David which was perfectly committed to memory, besides their Sunday dinner into the bargain. A Psalter was presented to every one who came. There were sometimes forty or fifty children gathered at one time; and their parents, who were mostly plain country people, were extremely pleased and grateful.

The influence of this Sunday-school was such, that the neighbouring ministers declared a mighty change was wrought, not only upon the children, but on the men and women at home. For the parents would naturally hear their children repeating their sacred lessons; whereas, heretofore, their tongues had been exercised in singing lewd or profane songs, or at least idle ballads. Now the streets and

doors resounded with the sacred poetry of David's harp. Thus it is that children, in a multitude of instances, become the instructors of their parents ; and this is one of the greatest encouragements which we have in the work of Sunday-schools. If the minds of children are stored with the blessed, glorious truths of the Scriptures, we may hope that they will grow up to be admirers and practisers of all that is good. There were some parents in the other parishes, who entreated that their children might also be taught the catechism. Such, however, was Mr. Ferrar's love of order, that he utterly refused this ; telling them that the instruction in the Bible was a thing by itself, but that catechising was the business of their parents, and of their own minister. He informed them that "in doing some things good in appearance, one might do very ill, by encroaching on other men's offices ;" a maxim which it would be well for every reader to treasure up. He bade them have a special care of this well-baited and hidden snare, which the devil everywhere cunningly lays in the way of well-meaning people. When he cannot persuade

them to foul, known sin, he tempts them to do something good in itself, but which it is presumption in them to attempt. The children not only repeated what they had learned that week, and had for every psalm a penny, but some of them recited a part of what they had formerly learned, in order to fix these incomparable devotions in their memories.

At half after ten, the minister of Steeple-Gidding, the adjoining parish, came with his own people. They were few in number, and mostly Mr. Ferrar's tenants. The bell rang again, and the whole family, with the *Psalm-children*, as they were called, met their neighbours, and took their several places. Mr. Ferrar went up into the chancel, and read the second service at the communion-table; after which the neighbouring clergyman preached. Returning in the same order as before to the house, they found a number of long, narrow tables ready spread upon trestles, or moveable frames. The children arranged themselves on each side of the tables. Old Mrs. Ferrar, who esteemed it an honour to imitate the Saviour in serving the poor, often set the first dish upon the table with her own hands.

When the blessing of God had been asked upon their food, the children proceeded to take their meal standing. Their pence had already been given them for their Sunday lessons, and they were kept in order by a suitable person left for that purpose.

After this the bell was rung for the family dinner. It was a principle in the household that every thing should be sweetened by religion, and while they all stood in the great dining room, a hymn was sung by them, accompanied with the organ. While they were receiving nourishment for their bodies, one, whose turn it was, read a chapter in the Bible, that their hearts might at the same time have spiritual food. This was very much the custom of Christians in former times, and in large families it might still be practised with great advantage, especially upon the Lord's-day. It would prevent much vain and useless conversation. After dinner every one had liberty to go where he pleased, either into the fresh air, or their respective retirements. About two o'clock the bell called them together again, and they all went to Steeple-Gidding church, to attend the evening service.

Upon their return, they assembled in the great chamber, where they all said, at one time, the psalms which on other days they said at different stated hours. They were then free until supper, which was about six o'clock. The organ began to play as they came into the parlour; they sang an anthem while the food was brought upon the table. After God's blessing had been craved, one read a chapter of the Bible, and another read some instructive narrative from the Book of Martyrs, or other useful works. In summer time, after supper, most of them took the air out of doors; in winter they repaired to their private apartments. The elder members of the family often spent this time in serious conversation. At eight o'clock they were once more summoned by the bell to their place of prayer. The service commenced with the singing of an anthem; and after prayers, they bade each other good night. The young people retired to their beds, and the elder ones to their closets. It was a rule of the family that after prayers no one should go up and down the house; every one was required to keep his own room.

Such was the Sabbath at Little-Gidding. Whatever may be thought of the wisdom displayed in their arrangement of time, all must agree that a beautiful order and decorum, as well as diligence and piety, shine in the whole plan. There is always danger lest such methods should generate an empty formality, but this may be said of the best services which are known among men. It is pleasing to observe such attention to this holy day at a time when the loyalists of England commonly observed it as a season of merriment. It was but eight years before Mr. Ferrar's settlement at Gidding, that James had issued his proclamation against the strict observance of the Sabbath, and eight years after that Charles I. made a similar proclamation, encouraging sports on the Lord's-day. Mr. Ferrar's own words, though somewhat ancient in style, deserve to be here quoted, with regard to the Sabbath. "It is a day of rest, not of pleasures. It frees us from bodily labours, but it should more intend the exercises of the mind. God *blessed* the day and *sanctified* it; they must both go together. If we would have it happy, we must make it holy; and that can

be by nothing better done than by taking a survey of all God's works, according to the two divisions of heaven and earth, whereunto he hath reduced all sorts of generations. And if it seem too long and hard a matter to go through all, we need but return to ourselves, where we shall find an epitome of all."

Upon the first Lord's-day of every month, and also upon the festivals of the English church, they always celebrated the Lord's Supper. On the Saturday preceding these solemn occasions, Mr. Ferrar employed himself in explaining this sacred ordinance to the younger members of the family, and in exhorting the elder, and preparing all for the approach to the holy communion. On these days the servants who had sat down with them at the Lord's table, were not thought unworthy to dine in the parlour with them. It was their custom to sit at the lower end of the high table where they dined that day.

CHAPTER VII.

Daily Employments and Devotions at Little-Gidding—
Inscription—Vigils, or Watch-nights.

THE little community at Gidding were not less regular upon other days of the week. Believing that *method is the half of business*, they observed a strict and constant order in all their employments. If they erred, it was upon the extreme of system and formality, and the world is now so little inclined to extravagance of this kind, that their example is not likely to be injurious.

They arose as early as on the Sabbath. It was expected that every one should engage in secret prayer before he left his private apartment. This it is which seasons the whole succeeding hours of a Christian day. Their first meeting was in the great chamber already mentioned. Here the younger nephews and nieces repeated to Mr. Ferrar those parts of the Holy Scriptures which they had lately been

learning. After this they retired for a time to their closets. At six o'clock the bell rang, and they assembled again in the common hall. Here a certain number of them began reading alternately, verse by verse, the Psalms appointed for that hour. It was a singular rule of the house, that the whole book of Psalms should be devoutly read over in this manner, once in the twenty-four hours. They were divided into companies for this purpose, and each company knew its time and portion. It seems likely that Mr. Ferrar borrowed this custom from what he had observed among the papists upon the continent, where it is very common in monasteries to read or chant over the whole Psalter every day. It is much to be questioned whether this was a judicious arrangement. There was manifest danger of its degenerating, especially with the young, into a mere formality. It tied up the family too strictly to the observance of every hour, when some liberty might have been advantageous. With all our veneration for the book of Psalms, we think the attention thus bestowed upon it inordinate. The time spent in reading over this single book, three hundred

and sixty-five times in the year, might have been more profitably employed upon other portions of the word of God. And there is something which is not unlike superstition in the stress laid upon the repetition, every hour, even of inspired compositions.

Immediately after this, one of the company repeated from memory a chapter or section from a Harmony of the four evangelists, of which more shall be said in the sequel. This book was so divided, and the various parts so allotted, that the gospel history was repeated once every month. A short hymn, accompanied by the organ, was sung every hour. It was commonly something like the following :

So angels sing, and so sing we,
To God on high all glory be :
Let him on earth his peace bestow,
And unto men his favour show.

These services, which were conducted with great solemnity, were so adjusted that the psalms, prayers, and repetitions occupied only a quarter of an hour.

After this they proceeded, as on the Lord's-day, to prayers in the church, when Mr. Ferrar officiated. By this time it was seven

o'clock, at which hour the second company proceeded with the Psalms and other exercises, in the manner which has been described. The children then went to breakfast, and afterwards to the school-house, with their respective teachers. Old Mrs. Ferrar, from her chair, inspected her daughters and grandchildren, like olive-branches round her table. The latter sat at their books or work in great silence; or when there was any conversation, they were required to avoid "vain talking, and jesting, which are not convenient." Every hour had its allotted business, for their careful guardian used to maintain that this was the only way to effect great things with ease and pleasure. This he therefore enjoined upon them, even in their spiritual exercises. Some spent their time in preparing the Scripture Harmony, or getting it by heart. Others practised vocal and instrumental music. Writing and arithmetic employed some, while others were engaged in manual labour. Mr. Ferrar desired that every one who was willing should be taught some trade. For this purpose he had in the house the daughter of a

bookbinder from Cambridge, who instructed them in this useful mechanical art.

He thought it very important that they should early be inured to profitable labour; and used to put them in mind of that passage in Psalm cxxviii:—"Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways; for thou shalt *eat the labour of thy hands.*" "Whereas (said he) the world thinks the living upon rents, and other men's labours, to be their honour and happiness: David here makes the contrary an effect and sign of blessedness." He also taught them, that while labour was Adam's punishment, it also carried a medicine along with it, to cure him of sloth and luxury. He assured them, that to concern themselves with some temporary occupation was far from being degrading, and that the apostle Paul himself, though devoted to God's service, employed himself in tent-making.

Every hour of the day had its regular religious observance. At ten o'clock, there was a solemn service in the church; and at noon the dinner was served up. While all things

were in preparation, a hymn was sung to the organ, and after they had taken their seats, a youth, whose turn it was, read to the company out of some English history. They thought silence at meals unpleasant, and the ordinary discourse of so great a number unprofitable. For this reason they were accustomed to have something read aloud; such as voyages and travels, the description of foreign countries, and narratives of an entertaining and instructive kind. This not only refreshed, but enriched their minds, and to assist their recollection, a summary collection was kept of all the most remarkable passages. This was arranged by one of the schoolmasters, and was transcribed by the scholars. Immediately after dinner, a repetition was made of something which had been read before; that is, one of the boys repeated a story, selected for him, in different language from that in which it had first been presented. This gave the young people a familiarity with public speaking, and also enabled them to express themselves well, and unaffectedly. The whole family thus became versed in the most important parts of history, and that by a method

which rendered it rather a pleasure than a task.

In all these arrangements, we can observe Mr. Ferrar's love of order, his diligence, and his piety. There is much to be commended, and some things as to the propriety of which we may safely doubt. Few families have it in their power to observe such a routine; fewer still have the zeal or patience to endure such a yoke. We are far from giving indiscriminate praise to all that we record as history, yet we give even these minute particulars, as exemplifying the peculiarities of the man. Their singularities naturally excited attention, and drew upon them some censure; and, as they were much visited, they caused a tablet to be placed in a conspicuous part of the hall where they entertained strangers, with the following inscription;

He that by reproof of our errors, and remonstrance of that which is more perfect, seeks to make us better, is welcome as an angel of God.

And

He that by a cheerful participation of that which is good confirms us in the same, is welcome as a Christian friend.

But,

He that any way goes

But,

He that censures us in

about to disturb us in that which is and ought to be among Christians, though it be not usual in the world, is a burden while he stays, and shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.

And

absence for that which in presence he made a show to approve of, both by a double guilt of flattery and slander, violates the bond of friendship and Christianity.

Mary Ferrar, widow, mother of this family, aged about 80 years, bids adieu to all fears and hopes of this world, and only desires to serve God.

In the ancient Christian church, there is reason to think that whole nights were sometimes spent in devotion. These were called *Vigils*, or watchings. Mr. Ferrar proposed to such of his family as chose to adopt this practice, to set apart some such seasons, though without any constraint. He found many willing to join him in this. There are some denominations of evangelical Christians who observe this at the present day; and where it is the tribute of sincere devotion, and is conducted with pious decorum, there can be no blame attached to it. The judicious commentator, Thomas Scott, remarks: "If we are in a proper frame of mind, we shall rather abridge ourselves of wonted refresh-

ments than neglect communion with God : nay, there may be urgent cases, when even the night itself does not seem too long to pour out our hearts before him."

The Vigil began about nine o'clock at night, and was continued for four hours. Those, however, who watched did not undress themselves all that night, but lay down in their clothes from one till six in the morning. This was observed in separate apartments, the men by themselves, and the women by themselves. The two who watched together repeated, alternately, all the Psalms which they had not recited in the day. These holy compositions they used as their form of prayer, devoutly repeating them upon their knees. At intervals, such as could play and sing refreshed themselves with sacred music. As soon as their watch was ended, they came and knocked at Mr. Ferrar's room, bidding him good-morrow, and leaving him a candle lighted at his door. He then arose, for one o'clock in the morning was the hour at which he constantly began his prayers and meditations, when it was not his own turn to keep watch.

We are far from inviting others to imitate

this example ; yet Mr. Ferrar was not singular in this. The martyr, Hugh Latimer, even when he was more than eighty years of age, constantly rose at two o'clock. And the celebrated Thomas Ken strictly accustomed himself to but one sleep, which often obliged him to rise at one or two in the morning, and sometimes sooner : this continued almost till his last illness. David also says, “ *At midnight* I will rise to give thanks unto thee, because of thy righteous judgments.”—Ps. cxix. 62.

CHAPTER VIII.

Visitors—Domestic Habits—Message from the Queen
—Scripture Harmonies.

THERE was nothing austere or repulsive in the family at Little-Gidding. They encouraged the society of the neighbouring gentry, and endeavoured in this way to be useful. Yet they seldom made excursions, or visits of any length. When they first entered upon the manor, the suspicion of the plague prevented much intercourse with their neighbours; and when this fear had passed away, it had become generally known that they wished to live much in retirement. Curiosity led many persons to Little-Gidding, where they were kindly received, and treated with all hospitality. A glass of wine or a tankard of ale, with a piece of cake, was offered to all decent visitors. Persons of quality sometimes lingered, as if to partake of their meals, or to lodge with them. No invitation, however, was given; and it was not

their custom to entertain strangers, unless when the latter were really in need of their humane attentions. Indeed had they done otherwise, they would have been overburdened with a multitude of guests, whom they could not, with any civility, have avoided. There were instances in which men of fortune, from a strong curiosity, pretended to lose their way, and leaving their servants and equipage at the neighbouring village, sought a night's lodging at Gidding. Such persons were kindly entertained. As the mansion was upon a high road, numbers of gentry and clergy were accustomed to call as they passed and repassed.

Mr. Ferrar's singular manner of life attracted the attention of many entire strangers. Learned persons of other persuasions, and even Romish priests, sometimes came to converse with him, and to discover his opinions. Towards such persons he had no reserve in the expression of his sentiments. Without inquiring who they were, he always entertained them with serenity and frankness, and with all the courtesy which was due. The nearest neighbour to Mr. Ferrar was a Roman

Catholic gentleman, who often came with his lady to Gidding, though their visits were not returned. He one day brought with him three learned priests, one of whom was a famous defender of the Church of Rome. They were all full of curiosity to examine a man so much noted for talents and devotion. He freely entered into controversy with them; and in this he had a great advantage, because in his travels he had seen their practices with his own eyes, and had made it his special business to compare the lives of papists with their pretensions. The debate was spun out to a great length, and was managed on both sides with good temper. Almost every point which is disputed between Roman Catholics and Protestants was brought up, and they parted in an amicable manner. One of the priests afterwards said that he had seen Little-Gidding, the place so much in everybody's mouth, and that he found the master of the house different from what he had expected; a profound and solid man, of wonderful memory, keen wit, flowing eloquence, extensive reading, and great experience.

While Mr. Ferrar was most conscientious

in the disposal of his time, he was far from being morose or inaccessible. He gave orders that if any one came to see him, even if he were in his study, he should be called; for he hoped that they came either for his good or their own. The whole design of his life was to make himself and others better. Few ever parted with him without satisfaction, and we are told of some who, after spending only a few hours in that happy society, carried away with them a lasting fervour of devotion. When strangers came to the house, even though of a different persuasion, they were invited to accompany the family to the place of prayer, and their hours of going to church were never altered on account of visitors. Sometimes persons came from a mere idle curiosity. Such took the liberty, at times, of expostulating with Mr. Ferrar upon his retired and severe life, and recommended a course of greater recreation and pleasure. He used to reply, that he would rather not live on earth an hour longer, than pursue the method which the world calls living generously, and like a gentleman, eating and drinking, keeping irregular hours, having time

hanging so heavily as to spend much of it in inventing new follies, hunting, hawking, cards, and dice.

It is well known that the Queen of Great Britain was a zealous papist. Charles I. had often told her of a family which, without any vows, and without being members of the Romish Church, pursued as regular and devout a life as was known in the strictest monasteries. The Queen supposed this to be a mere pleasantry of the King, and determined to go in person and inspect the establishment. The cross-roads of the country happened, however, to be at that time almost impassable. She therefore contented herself with sending a trusty messenger, Mr. Newton, to take an exact account of all their arrangements. Upon his return she expressed great regret that she had not made the journey herself.

A still more notable visit was made to Mr. Ferrar's family two or three years after his decease, when the civil war commenced in England. During all the troubles which preceded this event, he had remained in tranquil obscurity. In 1642, when Charles I. was marching into the north, to set up his royal

standard at Nottingham, he was told that he was in the vicinity of Little-Gidding. Misguided and unfaithful as this unfortunate monarch was, he appears to have had a kind of reverence for consistent piety. He struck out of his way, and rode directly to the house of the Ferrars, in company with the Prince of Wales, Prince Rupert, the Duke of Richmond, and many other of the cavaliers. This Prince Rupert was the son of the unfortunate Palatine whose bride Mr. Ferrar had accompanied to Holland more than twenty years before. Upon the commencement of hostilities between the King and parliament, he had come over with his brother, Prince Maurice, and enlisted under the royal banner. The King took a view of every thing with a curious eye, and, in the midst of his own perplexed affairs, spent a good deal of time in reading their Harmonies of the Bible. The princes and gentlemen, in the mean time, received such refreshment as the house afforded.

This is a proper place to give some account of the Scripture Harmonies, to which some allusion has been made. The first of these was called a *Concordance*. Concordances have

been formed upon various methods. The most common is that of a dictionary, in which any verse may be found by seeking for some principal word in it. The first of this kind was made in Latin, by Cardinal Hugo, who flourished about the year 1240, and died in 1262. It was he who first divided both the Old and New Testaments into *chapters*, as we now have them ; and these he subdivided into smaller portions, which he distinguished by the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, G, placed at equal distances from each other according to the length of the chapters. The facility of reference thus afforded by Hugo's divisions and concordance having become known to Mordecai Nathan, a celebrated Jewish Rabbi, in the fifteenth century, he undertook a similar concordance to the Hebrew Scriptures, and marked every fifth verse with a Hebrew letter. The numerals were affixed to the other verses in the Hebrew Bible by Athias, a Jew of Amsterdam, about 1663. The division of the New Testament into verses was first made by Robert Stephens, in 1551, and for the same purpose of reference in a Concordance.

The *Concordance* made by Mr. Ferrar was what we should now call a *Harmony* of the Gospels: indeed, both words have originally the same signification. The book was divided into a hundred and forty heads, and was a digest, or arrangement of the history of Christ. An hour every day was spent in planning it, and the young ladies did the work, by cutting out from each evangelist the passages selected, and laying them together so as to complete each head or chapter. After cutting out these pieces with their knives or scissors, they neatly and exactly pasted them upon sheets of paper. This was done so dextrously as to resemble printing, and none who saw the book for the first time detected the art. The whole, after being pasted, was passed through a heavy press, which rendered it smooth and even. It was entitled: "The Actions, Doctrines, and other Passages touching our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as they are related by the four Evangelists, reduced into one complete body of history; wherein that which is severally related by them, is digested into order, and that which is jointly related by all or any of them, is ex-

pressed in their own words, by way of comparison: Secondly, brought into one narration by way of composition: Thirdly, extracted into one clear context by way of collection: yet so, as whatsoever was omitted in the context is enacted by way of supplement in another print, and in such a manner, as all the four Evangelists may easily be read severally and distinctly by each apart, and alone from first to last, and in each page throughout the book are sundry pictures added, expressing either the facts themselves or their types and figures, or other things appertaining thereunto; the book is divided into an hundred and forty heads."

Many hands were engaged upon this labour, and even old Mrs. Ferrar lent a hand to complete it. It was much spoken of abroad, and an account of it was even taken to court. Upon a certain occasion, when some extraordinary business had taken Mr. Ferrar to London, it happened that Charles I. lodged at Aphorpe, seven miles from Little-Gidding. He despatched one of his attendants thither, to entreat a sight of this Concordance, which he heard was a great rarity, promising to send it

back before many days after he should have perused it. The family were in some perplexity, but, after consultation, determined that his majesty's pleasure ought to be readily obeyed; especially as the gentleman protested, that if they did not send it then, he knew the king would send for it again before he slept. It was accordingly sent. Instead of a few days, it was kept several months. The same gentleman was sent back with it from London to Gidding. He carried to them the king's hearty thanks for lending him the book, which in his opinion was highly to their honour, and much beyond his expectations. He begged them to excuse his delay, and also the notes which he had pencilled in the margin. The messenger affirmed, that Charles had read in it daily; and requested, in the king's name, that they would prepare him a similar volume for his own use.

The ladies of the family set about this new labour with great care, and finished it in about a year's time. It was bound by their own hands, in a peculiar and elegant manner. The volume was presented to the king by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Dr. Cosins,

Master of Peter-House, Cambridge. It was greatly admired for its external elegance, as well for the judgment with which it had been compiled ; and Charles said, with justice, that “ it was a present for the greatest king upon earth.” And then, turning to the Archbishop, he said : “ What think you, my lord, shall I obtain a second favour from these good people ? I have another suit to them ; the matter is this : I have often read over the lives and actions of the kings of Judah and Israel, in the Books of Kings and Chronicles, that the latter was a supplement to the former ; and I find some difficulty in reconciling them together. I should desire that these good people should make me such a book, as would bring these two books into one full and perfect history, and yet so as I may at the same time see them each several and apart to be read. They will easily understand my mind, I know. Will you let them know my pleasure ?”

The king was assured that it should be done. The request was sent to Gidding, and afforded them work for another year. The book was bound in purple velvet, richly gilt, and was put into the king's own hands by Mr. John

Ferrar. "This book," said he, "in all kinds far surpasses my hopes, and is done in a far more excellent way of composure than I conceived it could have been; I shall make it my companion. Herein I shall behold God's infinite mercies, and his just judgments; his rewards of the good kings, his punishing of the evil kings, his promises and his threatenings surely accomplished; now I must needs say I have gained a second treasure. Their care, their skill, and their cost hath been superlative, and so let them know my esteem of it." It had been well for Charles if he had kept his word, and thus profited by instruction; but he had already imitated the folly of Rehoboam, and was soon to experience a greater fall. This very volume is said to be preserved to this day, in the library of St. John's College, Oxford.

CHAPTER IX.

Self-denial of Mr. Ferrar—Characteristic Anecdotes.

THERE is reason to believe that Mr. Ferrar attached too much importance to mortification of the body. He accustomed himself, at length, to spend eighteen hours out of the twenty-four, in study, labour, or devotion. In the latter part of his life he seldom sat by a fire, and scarcely ever sat at all in his study. He usually paced the floor, or stood at a desk, and some of his writings he is said to have penned upon his knees. While his good mother was alive, she endeavoured to abate his rigour in watching. He assured her that while it profited his soul, it did his body no harm, and that his constitution was more injured by excess in sleeping or eating than by any thing else. After his mother's death he seldom went to bed oftener than once a week, but lay upon the floor, wrapped in a frieze gown, with a bear's skin under him. Yet he

felt no decay of his strength for the last seven years of his life.

From what has been said it will be seen that he was not a volatile or unstable man, yet he thought he found great advantage, both to body and mind, in varying his pursuits, and never continuing in any study or employment so long as to make it wearisome. The most salutary rest is sometimes a change of occupation.

For the entertainment of the family he composed dialogues and scenes, of a sacred and moral kind; the characters of which were sustained by the younger inmates. By these means he wished to draw them off from Christmas games, and wilder sports, which make way for riot and extravagance. The latter he called carnal excesses. "Though the heart, (said he) and the flesh too, should rejoice, as David says, yet we must not forget what follows,—it is in the living God that mirth and jubilee are to be exercised: the allowance of better cheer on festival seasons must be only so far as may serve to the increase of your ascending joys." On such occasions these dialogues, founded upon passages

in history, were pronounced. They fill two or three large folio volumes, and though they are not suitable for publication, are elegant, ingenious, and profitable.

When Mr. Ferrar was applied to for his counsel, as was frequently the case, it was his manner to write down briefly the substance of what was proposed: he would then set down his answer, his advice, and the reasons of it. Such short notes, he found by experience, were more useful than verbal communications; and there was less room for mistake. His correspondence was extensive, and he kept a copy of every important letter which he wrote. In this way he did much good, and made his letters the means of conveying religious truth. He used to say that religion was diffusive; that our Saviour's proverb was, *It is more blessed to give than to receive*; but the devil's proverb was (as commonly understood), *Charity begins at home*. Accordingly he was a charitable householder. Besides the alms occasionally given at the door, to such as were really in need, there was a certain amount distributed every day among the poor of the towns around the

manor. They were admitted into a lower room, where Mr. Ferrar was usually present, to see their wants relieved, to inquire who were sick, and to give spiritual counsel.

It is a difficult thing to be a "wise re-prover." Mr. Ferrar possessed this happy talent in a remarkable degree. He was accustomed to relate some pointed anecdote, which might convey a rebuke to the conscience of such as did wrong. Sometimes he gave his best counsels when he seemed to be only asking advice. He made it a principal study to learn how to deal with wounded consciences. As he had been much tempted in his early days, he was able to assist those who were distressed in their minds. While he was in Italy, a young Englishman fled thither, who had murdered another in a duel. He was noticed at Padua, as a man desperately melancholy. It so happened that he fell into the company of Mr. Ferrar, and found him so kind, that he confessed to him his crime, and his remorse. He seemed to be broken-hearted, and truly penitent for his atrocious transgression. Mr. Ferrar assured him that the mercies of God reached even to

his case, dreadful as it was, and succeeded in leading him to the hope of the gospel. The young man appeared never to be satisfied, except in the company of this good instructor, whom he ever afterwards esteemed above all the world.

He spent much of his time in writing prayers, meditations, and other devotional compositions; and employed one of his nephews in translating a work of this kind from the Italian. As we have seen, he used all his influence to lead every one around him to commit to memory large portions of Scripture, especially the Psalms and the Gospels. He used to hire poor people, both young and old, to do this, in order to win them over from their vain thoughts and pursuits; and that these holy words might afford them subjects for conversation, without hindering their daily labours. He told them that this was as needful for their souls as food for their bodies. “Who knows (said he) what may be our condition before we die? We may be blind; we may be in prison; we may be travelling, where we can use no books. And no one can know, till he has tried as I have, the comfort

and benefit he may derive from such a treasure in his heart.”

Such was the singular character and extraordinary life of Nicholas Ferrar. As we should suppose beforehand, many persons misunderstood and misrepresented him. The little establishment at Gidding was called a monastery, and he was denounced as a Papist. This was altogether unjust. We do not recommend the rules of his family, because we find from the history of the Church, that just in this way well-meaning and devout men laid the foundation of monkery. In the fourth century, St. Anthony and others retired from the world, and gave themselves up to the service of God. They may have had good motives, but those who followed their example fell into great abuses. The deserts of Egypt became peopled with solitary monks. In a short time the Church was overrun with multitudes of idle mortals, who abandoned all human connexions, advantages, pleasures, and concerns, and languished in seeming piety, while they did the world no good.

But the family at Little-Gidding was not a monastery. For, first, in monasteries per-

sons are gathered together without family connexion ; in this family, they were naturally bound to one another as relatives. Secondly, in monasteries all the inmates are of one sex ; in this family both sexes lived together in purity and affection. Thirdly, in monasteries each individual is under a solemn vow to remain unmarried ; in this family there were numerous marriages, and the females were carefully educated so as to be good wives and mothers. Fourthly, in monasteries every one is bound by vows never to relinquish that kind of life ; in this family any one was at liberty to leave the community when he chose, and many did so. Lastly, in monasteries every one is under a vow of subjection to the Pope ; in this family they were all good Protestants, and abhorred the corruptions of popery.

Mr. Ferrar was so far from being inclined to the Romish religion, that he expressed his detestation of the Mass. He said he had been much in popish countries, and that God's honour and worship were wounded by their practices ; that they adored what they could not believe to be the body and blood of Christ. He once said that such a sacrifice profaned

the very place where it was celebrated. One of the company replied, "Why, sir, if Mass should be celebrated in your house, without your leave or knowledge, what would you do?"—"I will tell you a story," said he. "A peer of France who had long been in the secret service of the Spanish court, being discovered, fled into Spain. As soon as he arrived, the King sent his secretary to a certain duke and grandee of Spain, entreating him to lend a palace of his, as the hiding-place of this fugitive. 'Tell the King,' said the nobleman, 'my house shall ever be at his majesty's service,' and when the secretary was about to depart—"nay," said he, "stay and hear me out; as soon as ever the house is mine again, to do what I will in it, I will purge it with such a vengeance that all the world shall ring of it; for I will burn it down to the very ground, rather than that it shall be said that I harboured a traitor under my roof."—"But," replied the friend, "do you account the Mass so great a traitor that you would burn down the house if it had been said there?"—"I say not so," answered Mr. Ferrar, "but I tell

you, since you put me to it, I would pull down that *room*, though I built another.”

Mr. Ferrar's zeal against error is laudable, though this particular manner of expressing it would have been extravagant and unwise. It serves to show, however, how little he deserved to be suspected of popery. It was his fault that he attributed too much sanctity to places and forms. His devotion might have been just as great, if he had laid smaller stress upon outward observances.

CHAPTER X.

Last Illness and happy Death.

WE are now approaching the closing scenes of Mr. Ferrar's life. It is to be regretted that our materials furnish us with few dates, so that we cannot state his exact age. It is said, however, to have been in November, 1639, that he began to feel some weakness and faintness, though without pain. He went to church in the morning, and officiated as usual. He afterwards sent for his friend, the minister of *Great-Gidding*, and asked him to come every day, and read prayers for him. "My first care," said he, "is that the service of my God be not one day neglected by those who can go to church. I know that I shall not be able to perform my part there any more."

The family were alarmed, and betrayed their anxiety and fear by their countenances. He urged on them the duty of patience and resignation. They asked him why it was that he seemed so certain his end was draw-

ing near? "I will tell you one reason," he replied; "in all former sicknesses, I have always had a strong desire to recover, and have been earnest in prayer that God would spare me. He hath spared me, at times when skilful physicians thought there was no hope. And I may further say, to the glory of his great name, I never earnestly set myself to beg any thing of God, but he fulfilled the petition of his most unworthy servant. But, for some time past, I have no inclination to beg longer life of God; nay, I rather desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ."

This general sinking of nature grew upon him, but the powers of his soul were as active and lively as they had ever been when in perfect health. Upon the Lord's-day morning he received, with great desire and devotion, the holy communion, according to the rites of the Church of England. In this ordinance, he made a solemn and touching confession of his faith and trust in the blessed Redeemer, renouncing all pretence of meriting any thing. He declared that when men had done all, they must truly acknowledge themselves to be most unprofitable. The minister who offi-

ciated said that he had never heard so excellent a discourse, and that he thought he should never hear the like expressions again.

He spent day and night in exhorting the family. He told them that he was going to God, to give an account of what he had taught them, assuring them that it was according to His holy word. He entreated them to rely upon God, and to serve Him with sincerity. He warned them against popery, which he said was mere novelty, and recommended to them what he called "the good old way." When the young people approached him, he said they were suns in the high noon of their Christian course, who had gone through much of the heaven already; but that there was much of it yet before them, which their souls must labour to complete. Then he addressed himself in familiar language to the little children, and strove to make deep impressions on their tender souls, of the love and fear and service of God; reminding them to keep their Psalms and Gospels in their hearts, and setting before them the blessings which God would give them. He then fervently called upon God to keep them in his holy protection.

About three days before his death, as he lay in his sick-bed, about eight o'clock in the morning, he sent for his brother John, and other relations. "Brother," said he, "I would have you go to the church, and at the west end, at the door where we go into the church, I would have you measure from the stairs that you tread upon, seven feet to the westward, and at the end of that seven feet, there let my grave be made." His brother looked upon him with the deepest sorrow, with eyes bathed in tears. "Brother," added he, "that first place of the length of seven feet, I leave for your own burying-place. You are my elder brother; God, I hope, will let you there take up your resting-place, till we all rise again in joy."

There was another communication which he added: "When you have measured out the place for my grave, then go and take out of my study those three great hampers full of books, which have there been locked up for many years. Carry the hampers to the place of my grave, and see that you burn them all upon that spot. Go, let it be done, let it be done; and then come again all of you to me."

There were several hundreds of these books in various languages, which had been locked up ever since he came to Little-Gidding ; so that no one might use them. He had procured them, in different places, at great expense. There were tragedies, comedies, heroic poems, novels, romances, love-songs, and the like. His family obeyed him, and the fire flamed up so high from the hill on which the church and house stood, that many from the towns adjacent, and men who were at their labour in the fields, came running to the place, supposing the mansion to be on fire. When they saw what was doing, they went away, and reported that abundance of books were burning, and that Mr. Ferrar was dying.

When this circumstance came to be spread abroad, idle people circulated a story that he could not die until he had burned his conjuring books. This report went as far as to some of his old friends in America. The books were such as had, indeed, bewitched him in his younger days. He knew no other way of bearing so strong a testimony against them. And he had in his mind those early

converts at Ephesus, who had used curious arts, and who brought their books and burned them before all men. Thus it was that Sir Philip Sidney repented of his *Arcadia*, and gave orders on his death-bed that it should be suppressed, on account of the temptations which it presents to break the seventh commandment.

When his brother returned to his bedside, assuring him that they had done what he desired, he raised himself, sat up in the bed, and gave God hearty thanks.

Many ministers of the gospel came to see the dying man. He generally asked them first to join with him in prayer, and then to favour him with such discourse as was fit for dying men. One of them so far mistook his duty as to begin thus: "Sir, what joy may you now have of the many almsdeeds you have done—" and he was going on to enumerate them. "What speak you of such things?" cried Mr. Ferrar; "it had been but a suitable return for me to have given all I had, and not to have scattered a few crumbs of alms here and there. God forgive me, I

most humbly beseech Him, my too much carnal love to my friends in this respect !”

At another time, a friend said to him : “ Whether that sickness be for a trial of your patience, or for your sins, or *for our punishment* ”—at the addition of that word he was much displeased, beseeching him to speak so no more, for he was a most miserable sinner.

Once, during his sickness, he overheard his brother bemoaning his own loss and that of the family, if God should thus bereave them, and concluding thus : “ Alas ! what shall become of us poor sheep, if the shepherd be taken away ! ” His deep humility was so much wounded at finding them reposing so much trust in himself, that he called his brother to the bedside, and said, with great warmth, “ O, my brother, what mean you to use that undue expression ! Go, I pray you, to the church, and fast this day, and beg of God to forgive you.”

At the return of another Lord's-day he found himself more and more declining. Heartily wishing to be released, he prayed : “ Why stay I here, Lord, any longer, since I can do little now but take my ease and

sleep? Lord, in thy good time, receive my soul!" Among other passages from the Psalms, he repeated this with almost every breath: *Haste thee, O God, to deliver me, make haste to help me, O God.*

It was the first Lord's-day of the month, the regular day for their communion. He therefore entreated the minister, that after they had celebrated it at the church, he would return and administer to him; saying that the heavenly table was now his only support, as he had done with the earthly. After receiving, he offered up his most humble thanks for that most inestimable benefit. He then returned to the work in which he resolved to live and die, namely, the instruction of his family in the ways of piety. His last discourses were directed chiefly to his two unmarried nieces, whom he exhorted to be steadfast, and to commit themselves to the guidance of their Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

After midnight, having lain still a good while, he spoke a little, and observing that his attendants did not hear him, he said with a loud voice: "What, doth my speech fail! O, sweet Jesus, let it not fail me to the last,

I beseech thee !” He was asked if the ministers should be called ; for, supposing him asleep, they had gone out of his chamber. “ Entreat them,” said he, “ to come and pray together.” When they entered, he desired them to offer the prayer for a dying man. After this, they inquired how he was ? He replied, “ Pretty well, I thank my God and you ; and I shall be better.” He then lay still about half an hour, and seemed to those who surrounded his bed to be in a fine slumber, but suddenly threw his arms out of the bed with great strength, and with a strong and cheerful voice exclaimed, “ O what a blessed change is here ! what a change is here ! O what do I see—what do I see ! O let us come and sing, and praise the Lord, and magnify his holy name together. I have been at a great feast, O magnify the Lord with me.” One of his nieces said, “ At a feast, dear father ?”—“ Yea,” replied he, “ at the Great King’s feast ;” and he said this with the voice and manner of perfect health. While all present were amazed, and unwilling to interrupt him, he lay down quietly, and putting his hands into the bed, stretched them out, and

closed his eyes. The ministers went to prayer, and as they were praying that God would send his holy angels to carry his soul to heaven, while those very words were uttered, he opened his lips and gave one gasp, after which, without stirring hand or foot, he fell asleep in Jesus. The clock struck one just at that moment. All present remembered that it was the hour at which he constantly rose every morning, to pray to God, and to praise him. At that very hour God called him to his heavenly kingdom, to praise him with an innumerable company of angels, and with the spirits of just men made perfect. As one of the company said, he ended the Christian Sabbath here on earth, to begin the everlasting one in heaven.

THE END.



25-6

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01043 6857